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SANSKRIT AND DRAVIDIAN

In so many fields of scholarly endeavor it has nowadays become both fashionable and profitable to delve into the history of the discipline. I do not intend this evening to do more than touch on some topics in such study. I shall first take the easy path of identifying several events whose bicentennials and centennials we might celebrate in this year 1984.

The Asiatic Society, which has had in previous periods such names as the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, is this year celebrating the bicentennial of its foundation. It was the first learned society to be founded in our field. Its publications, both the journal in its various series, beginning with *Asiatick Researches*, and the prestigious *Bibliotheca Indica*, have made invaluable contributions to Indological learning, especially in Sanskrit, but also, I should note, in Dravidian, for Winfield's grammar and vocabulary of the Kui language were published in 1928-29 as works 245 and 252 of the *Bibliotheca Indica*. The beginnings of the Society were early in January 1784. The small initial membership included the prime mover Sir William Jones, that man of the Enlightenment whose explosive energy fired in the European world the interest in India and Sanskrit to which we owe the present form of our discipline. Not all the others of the small group are so familiar to us, but one of them was Charles Wilkins (later Sir Charles). He had begun his Sanskrit studies in 1778, and in October of 1784 (two hundred years ago to the

month) he had completed his translation of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the first work that was translated directly from Sanskrit into English. It was seen then in Benares by Warren Hastings, who at once wrote an introduction to it, and it was published in London in 1785. Jones's study of Sanskrit began in 1785, under the pressure of his need for unmediated access to *Manu* and the Hindu law books. But, besides, he was driven already, and became even more so, as the old culture of India was unfolded to him by his studies, by the most wide-ranging curiosity about all phases of that culture. The dates worthy of commemoration then come thick and fast. On February 2, 1786, he delivered to the Society his Third Anniversary Discourse (published in 1788 in *Asiatick Researches*), in which he announced to the world that Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and perhaps Germanic and Celtic, « have sprung from some common source ». Other Westerners had since the 16th century noted linguistic similarities and even hinted at historical connection, but Jones was the first firmly to draw the historical inference, and his prestige as an Orientalist gave the force which led his statement to have such fruitful results in the world of scholarship. In 1789 (Calcutta edition; London edition, 1790; German translation, 1791; Dutch translation, 1792; Danish translation, 1793; French translation, 1803) Jones's *Śakuntalā* burst upon Europe and the *littérateurs* of the Romantic movement with what amazing effects we all know.

It is unnecessary to trace the steps that followed this decade of discovery. In the following century most of the major and many of the minor texts of Sanskrit literature were recovered from manuscripts and made easily available to the scholarship of India and the world. Jones's linguistic lead was followed up with enthusiasm and brilliance in the Western world, especially at first in Germany. Indo-European comparative grammar flourished as one of the most brilliant intellectual achievements of Europe in the 19th century. In fact, the study of Sanskrit in the Western world was in most of the interested circles only preliminary and ancillary to that linguistic discipline. We might notice that this year is the centennial of the publication of the book that was provided for that purpose for American students — Charles Rockwell Lanman's *Sanskrit Reader*. First published in 1884, it has been re-

printed again and again, and is still, even though now somewhat antiquated, used as initial reading material, provided with commentary and a vocabulary which contains etymological notes that the beginning Indo-Europeanist needs. It is keyed with references to William Dwight Whitney's *Sanskrit Grammar* in its first edition of 1879; Lanman never revised the *Reader* references to agree with Whitney's 2nd edition of 1889 (and its subsequent reprints).

But in spite of this Western 19th century predominant interest in Sanskrit in its linguistic setting, there were many in the West whose interest chimed with that of India in Sanskrit as the vehicle of literature and learning. Much brilliant scholarly work of this kind was done both in India and the West, and has of course continued in the 20th century. Earlier Conferences have on the whole concentrated on this aspect of Sanskrit studies (as in fact does this one), and I do not wish to explore further this large section of the history of the field.

Concentration on Sanskrit and its overwhelming importance as the classical language of Indian literature, thought, and scholarship tends to conceal the fact that this language and the culture of which it is the vehicle have played an « imperialist » rôle in India parallel to that of Latin in Europe. It is seldom noted that Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Sāyaṇa, and many others lived in the Dravidian section of India. That the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* of the 10th century was a production of the Tamil country was hardly realized until modern times¹. Another work prominent in *Kṛṣṇa bhakti*, the *Kṛṣṇakarṇāmṛta*, originated in the south, but its origin has been overshadowed by Caitanya's introduction of it into Bengal and Vṛndāvana, and its South Indian origin has been much debated².

From this concentration on Sanskrit it resulted that the Dravidian languages of the south of the subcontinent in a sense were treated as inferior and subject, and were forced underground. The

1. JEAN FILLIOZAT, *Les dates du Bhāgavatapurāṇa et du Bhāgavatamāhātmya*, in « Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown », New Haven, Conn., American Oriental Society, 1962, pp. 70-7.

2. FRANCES WILSON, *The Love of Krishna, the Kṛṣṇakarṇāmṛta of Līlāśuka Bilvamaṅgala*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975.

brilliant and independent Tamil literature of the beginning of the 1st millennium A.D. was almost lost to sight for many centuries. It was only recovered (in fact, saved from total loss) when the scholarly interests of the 19th century, even if only indirectly, inspired two great scholars, U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar (1855-1942) and S. V. Damodaram Pillai (1832-1901), to search for manuscripts and publish critically these early works. Others followed their lead and a practically forgotten great literature was brought to light³.

Much scholarly work and discussion have followed. It has been gradually worked out⁴ that, though the impact of Sanskritization began in the time of or shortly after Aśoka (circa B. C. 200)⁵, it was only at about the middle of the following millennium that overall Sanskritization began. From then on, Tamil literature shows a progressively heavy overlay of the themes, mythology, and stories of Sanskrit literature (including Buddhist and Jain writings). The other three literatures of the Dravidian South began much later than the Tamil, and, though they show indigenous features, they are heavily Sanskritized, or inspired by Sanskrit literature and culture, from their beginnings: in Kannada the *Vaddārādhane*, lives of Jain saints, circa 900 A.D.; in Telugu Nannaya's version of the *Mahābhārata* in the 11th century; in Malayalam the *dūta* poem *Unṇunīli-sandēśam* in the 14th century, in the *mani-pravālam* style (mixed Malayalam and Sanskrit, macaronic in effect).

It is an obvious suggestion that there is here a great field for scholarly study, in the detail of the relations between Sanskrit literature and culture and those of the Dravidian languages of the South. I must not say or imply that this field has been completely neglected. No general treatment of the literatures of India has avoided pointing out the obvious sources of the earliest Kannada, Telugu, and Malayalam literatures, nor have the detailed histories of Tamil literature avoided treating the sources of the epics and

3. KAMIL ZVELEBIL, *Tamil Literature*, in « Handbuch der Orientalistik », 2.2.1, chapter 2: *The Rediscovery of Tamil Classical Literature*, pp. 5-21.

4. KAMIL ZVELEBIL, *The Smile of Murugan*, p. 8 for a chart.

5. See ZVELEBIL, *Tamil Literature*, cit., p. 50, n. 24, for the evidence for early Sanskrit or Sanskritic borrowings.

the *bhakti* collections in its medieval period. One need only mention as the most recent handbooks Kamil Zvelebil's three volumes⁶ with their extensive exposition and bibliography. More searching examination also of the relationships has been undertaken, as e.g. by George L. Hart III⁷ in his thesis that the lyric poetry of the earliest Tamil literature (*sangam*) is based on a tradition of oral poetry going back to the earlier megalithic culture of the Dravidian Deccan, and that the lyric poetry in Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit of the northern Deccan in the early centuries of the Christian era (e.g. the *Sattasaī*) owes many of its themes to this early Dravidian poetry; that this early Prakrit lyric initiated some elements of later Sanskrit literature (the use of Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit in the drama, some lyric themes) is an easy assumption. Such a study is to some extent speculative, as to be sure any study of early beginnings is likely to be. Detailed comparison of the material background of early Tamil literature with the megalithic culture as set forth in such a modern work as that by Leshnik, has apparently not yet been undertaken.

Much more firmly based is such a study as that by R. Vijayalakshmy of the Tamil *Cīvakacintāmaṇi* (of the 8-9th centuries A. D.)⁸. This scholar investigates in detail the amalgamation in this poem of earlier Tamil literary style and the ideals and content of the Sanskrit *mahākāvya*. The reviewer characterizes the study

6. *The Smile of Murugan: on Tamil Literature of South India*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1973; *Tamil Literature*, in «A History of Indian Literature», ed. Jan Gonda, vol. X, fasc. 1, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1974; *Tamil Literature*, in «Handbuch der Orientalistik», 2.2.1, Leiden/Köln, E. J. Brill, 1975.

7. *The Poems of Ancient Tamil, their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 1975; *The Relation between Tamil and Classical Sanskrit Literature*, in «A History of Indian Literature», ed. Jan Gonda, vol. X, fasc. 2, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1976. A typical favorable review of the latter work: T. BURROW, in «Indo-Iranian Journal» 21 (1979), pp. 282-4. For the megalithic culture, LAWRENCE S. LESHNICK, *South Indian 'Megalithic' Burials: The Pandukal [i.e. paṇṭu-kal] Complex*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1974.

8. *A Study of Cīvakacintāmaṇi: particularly from the point of view of interaction of Sanskrit language and literature with Tamil*, Ahmedabad, L. D. Institute of Indology, 1981. Unfortunately, I know this work so far only from an excellent review by INDIRA VISWANATHAN PETERSON, in *JAOS* 103 (1983), pp. 779-80.

as « pioneering work in the field of comparative studies in Sanskrit and Tamil literature ».

Such work I would suggest is a part of our field that has lain fallow too long and should be cultivated. Admittedly, not many scholars have all the language equipment that is necessary (I do not have it). It may be that only those born in South India will be really successful; if they are educated in India's cultural norm, they will have the requisite Sanskrit equipment. But is it too much to hope that some scholars from North India may also have the interest to acquire enough knowledge of some Dravidian language and literature to undertake such study? A few, but a very few, Western students have already been willing to make the investment of time and energy in such a potentially rewarding field.

The realization that in the domains of these literary languages of the South there exist also traditions of what is usually, somewhat paradoxically, called « oral literature », has led in recent years to such studies as that of the Telugu oral epic *Palnāṭivīrulakatha* by Gene H. Roghair⁹. A review of Roghair's work by David Shulman suggests some parallelisms with basic structural features of the *Mahābhārata* narrative. So also Brenda Beck points to parallels between the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the one hand and the *Aṇṇanmārkatai* (« the brothers' story »), a « folk epic » of the Koṇku district of Tamilnāḍu¹⁰. Such suggestions seem on the whole very tenuous, since there is no question of actual borrowing of plot, or even episodes, from the Sanskrit epics, but only of a use of parallel themes or even of what the folklorists have catalogued as « motifs ». It is possible that further research will eventuate in the identification of a body of such motifs to be found in all Indian epics, both the numerous « oral » epics practised all over India and the epics of Sanskrit literature.

Meanwhile, study of an oral literature practised by a completely non-literate backwoods « tribal » community in the Nilgiris in

9. *The Epic of Palnāḍu: a Study and Translation of Palnāṭi Virula Katha, a Telugu Oral Tradition from Andhra Pradesh, India*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982. Review: DAVID SHULMAN, in *JRAS* (1984), pp. 168-9.

10. BRENDA E. F. BECK, *The Three Twins: the Telling of a South Indian Folk Epic*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982.

South India, the Todas, has yielded several items of poetical language which have perfect parallels in Sanskrit poetical usage¹¹. In one song the bones of dead bodies stripped of flesh by worms and vultures laugh and shout for joy, which was interpreted by the informants as « lie white all over the place ». The Sanskrit poetical convention (*kavi-samaya*-) that laughter is white is commonplace. Similarly, the coolness of moonlight, especially as assuaging love's hot pangs, is well-known in Sanskrit; in one Toda song passage a beautiful woman is referred to as the shining of the « cool moon » (to[n]nesof). Given the cold climate of the 7000-foot-high Nilgiri plateau this does not strike one as being a native conceit. I have argued that both these poetical *samayas* must have made their way into the Toda song vocabulary ultimately from the Sanskrit *kāvya*; the intermediaries are still unknown or uncertain. Certainly in the case of the « cool moon », the frequency of this formula in Tamil literature, including the sangam poetry, makes it at least possible that Tamil (of what period?) is the intermediary. Or is it possible to think of the Todas showing here the use of an item inherited from Hart's early « megalithic culture » of the Dravidian Deccan? If so, it would be the only item so far identifiable as such.

The use by the Todas in mythology, whether in prose or song, of the verb *na.ś* « to play » to refer to the gods' creation activities, reminds one forcefully of Sanskrit *līlā* and *kṛīḍā* with the same reference to divine creation and activity. Here the search for intermediaries finds something, but is still inconclusive because of gaps in the evidence. The concept is old both in Sanskrit (e.g. *Mahābhārata* 12.296.2ab, *Mānavadharmaśāstra* 1.80, as well as in the theology of various sects popular in South India), Tamil (*vilaiy-āṭu* « to play, sport » is used of activities of gods, and my Toda informants, somewhat literate in Tamil, referred to *tiru-vilaiy-āṭtu* « the activities of a god », e.g. Krishna), and Kannaḍa (the *Vira-śaiva-Lingayat* sect in Mysore holds this view of Śiva's creation of the universe). In Toda also it is probably old, and, still lacking

11. M. B. EMENEAU, *Toda verbal art and Sanskritization*, in « Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda », 14 (1965), pp. 273-9; *Toda Songs*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971.

exact descriptive and historical knowledge of the Lingayatism of the Badagas, neighbors of the Todas, we cannot be sure of the route of the Toda borrowing — but it is assuredly Sanskritic in final origin.

More studies of this sort are sure to yield results of wider interest for the culture history of India.

I need not go into much detail on the linguistic relations of Sanskrit and the Dravidian languages. That these latter languages form a separate « family of languages » was asserted in print for the four literary languages, Kodagu, Tulu, and (surprisingly) Malto, as early as 1816 by Francis Whyte Ellis in an introduction to A. D. Campbell's Telugu grammar¹². Since the middle of the 19th century much work has been done on the family, both descriptively and historically. That these languages, whether literary or non-literary, have over the centuries been much influenced by Sanskrit and the descendant Indo-Aryan languages has long been recognized — to such an extent that it was long held in traditional Indian scholarship that such languages as Telugu were « Prakrits ». Recognition of the Dravidian family as such has produced a more correct doctrine, and consequently there has been much study, both piecemeal and systematic, of the Sanskrit and Prakrit loanwords in the Dravidian languages, especially in the literary ones. There has been less systematic work on the extent and nature of such borrowings in the non-literary languages and of the channels through which such borrowings have come. E.g. in the Toda language of the Nilgiris the common word for « god » is töw¹³. This language must have separated from pre-Tamil before the time when initial *k- was palatalized to c- before front vowels in Tamil, i.e. at latest just before the end of the 1st millennium B. C. Tamil in its earliest literature has teyvam, taivam « god », which is obviously related to Sanskrit dēva-, or probably rather to the secon-

12. Brought to the attention of modern scholars by N. VENKATA RAO, in « Annals of Oriental Research », University of Madras, 12 (1954-55), pp. 1-35; see also T. BURROW and M. B. EMENEAU, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984, p. vii.

13. Cf. M. B. EMENEAU, *Toda Grammar and Texts*, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1984, p. 191, text 1, which lists and discusses several classes of gods and uses only this word.

dary derivative *daiva-* or *daivya-* « divine », or even to Prakrit *dĕvva-* « divine ». Toda *tōw*, with its short vowel, is most easily equated sound for sound with the Prakrit form — but obviously the Toda word still presents problems as to its historical relationship with the various possible Tamil forms. Much work of this kind remains to be done for all the Dravidian languages, and some of the detail promises to be of great interest, as e.g. when Indo-Aryan borrowings show meaning developments which are found throughout the South. The late L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar did much valuable work in this direction¹⁴.

Of considerable ethnological interest is the derivation in the South Dravidian and a few of the Central Dravidian languages of words for « cross-cousins » (especially, but not only, those related to one through marriage, e.g. brother of one's wife or husband, sister's husband) from Sanskrit *maithuna-* « copulation; relating to sexual union ». The forms are in the South those that would be derived directly from Sanskrit (e.g. Tamil *maittunan*, *maccinan*, feminine *maittuni*, *maccini*, *macciṇa*/icci, but also *mata*/*ini*), but the meanings are those found in Prakrit and Marathi-Konkani for derived forms (e.g. Prakrit *mehunia-* « mother's brother's son », Marathi *mehuṇī*, *mevṇī*, « female cross-cousin »)¹⁵. This is an interestingly complicated extension of the type of phenomena that L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar treated.

14 *Semantic divergences in South Dravidian borrowings from Sanskrit*, in « *Journal of Oriental Research, Madras* », 8 (1934), pp. 252-66, 9 (1935) pp. 64-77. See also M. B. EMENEAU and T. BURROW, *Dravidian Borrowings from Indo-Aryan* (UCPL 26), Berkeley-Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1962, pp. 1-2, §3.

15. T. BURROW and M. B. EMENEAU, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961, entry 4189, entered these words as Dravidian in origin; *id.*, *Dravidian etymological notes*, in *JAOS*, 92 (1972), pp. 475-91, identified them as borrowings from Indo-Aryan, as *DBIA*, S18; *DEDR* (*id.*, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984) listed the data as Appendix 53. The Indo-Aryan material is in R. L. TURNER, *A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages*, London, Oxford University Press, 1966, entry 10341. P. S. Subrahmanyam now suggests that Telugu *mēna*, etc., belong with the 'body' words in *DEDR* 5099, Telugu *mēnu*, etc., as denoting 'blood relationship of cross-cousins, etc.' as opposed to mere marriage relationship (e. g. *mēna māma* 'maternal uncle'; *māma(gāru)* 'father-in-law'). Cf. also my review of THOMAS R. TRAUTMANN, *Dravidian Kinship*, in *Lg.*, 60 (1984), pp. 675-6.

A much more difficult and at times speculative study is devoted to borrowings in the reverse direction, i.e. from Dravidian into Sanskrit. There is no need to go into the matter here in detail. We may mention that it seems rather certain that even the Vedic texts have a few borrowings of this sort; e.g. the *R̥gveda* has mayūra- « peacock » (*DEDR* 4642), the *Atharvaveda* bilva- « Aegle marmelos » (*DEDR* 5509). Many very generally accepted borrowings are identified in later stages of the language. One of the problems is the delimitation of the period of such borrowings. Burrow¹⁶ finds that the majority of the borrowings into Sankrit and Pali are « concentrated between the late Vedic period and the formation of the classical language » (first recorded in *Pāṇini* and *Patañjali*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Śrautasūtras*, etc., and the Pali canonical texts).

A different type of lexical influence is seen in the Sanskrit word avamocana- « inn (for travellers) », which is found in the literature only in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (10.5.20), a text which is otherwise thought to have originated in the Tamil country. George L. Hart¹⁷ has identified this word as a calque of Tamil *viṭuti*, also « inn », the verbs Tamil *viṭu-* and Sanskrit *ava-muc-* coinciding in the meaning « to loosen, unharness » (*DEDR* 5393).

It need only be mentioned here that the much more important problem of structural influence of Dravidian upon Sanskrit and Indo-Aryan in general, i.e. of the « Indianization » of Indo-Aryan, which several scholars had broached long ago and which Jules Bloch worked on in the 3rd and 4th decades of this century, has been studied in recent decades and such work continues¹⁸.

I would end with an example of the benefit that can come to Indological study in general from the cross-fertilization of Sanskrit and Dravidian studies. One of the early Vijayanagar kings often

16. *The Sanskrit Language*, London, Faber and Faber, 1955. pp. 386-7.

17. *The Poems of Ancient Tamil*, p. 279, n. 9.

18. My own work in this general field up to 1978 has been collected in *Language and Linguistic Area* (ed. Anwar S. Dil; Stanford University Press, 1980). Several items completed since 1978 remain unpublished. Later work includes, along with smaller studies by numerous scholars both in India and abroad, the large work by COLIN P. MASICA, *Defining a Linguistic Area: South Asia*, University of Chicago Press, 1976.

appears in our handbooks as Kampana, and the Sanskrit poem *Madhurāvijaya* or *Vīrakamparāyacarita*, which was composed by his wife *Gaṅgādevī* (end of the 14th century A.D.), says that he was so named by his father. However, the poetess gives him this name only in one verse (2.34), which, deriving the name from the Sanskrit verb stem ā-kampaya- « to make [his enemies] tremble », is in fact an echo of *Mahābhārata* 2.4.19f-20, where in a list of heroes Kampana makes the Yavanas¹⁹ tremble. Elsewhere in her poem she identifies him as *Kamparāja*, *Kampendra*, or the like, and the alternative title of the poem contains *Kamparāya*. His personal name, in fact, is Kampa, and he is called in Kannada inscriptions *Kampan(n)a*. This contains Kampa plus the honorifically used kinship term *anna* « elder brother ». Such use of this and other kinship terms is found abundantly in the South Dravidian languages²⁰. His name in fact is *Kampañña* or *Kampaṇa*; the form with dental n is a Sanskritization (or, possibly, a Teluguization) of the form with retroflex n̪, and is to be avoided²¹. This example, it is hoped, and those given earlier will convince that Sanskrit and Dravidian are a team that go well in harness, and that those who can should attempt to drive them.

19. Note that in her poem the Sultan of Madhurā is conquered by her husband, and that in late Sanskrit the Mohammedans are called Yavanas.

20. M. B. EMENEAU, *Towards an onomastics of South Asia*, in *JAOS*, 98 (1978), pp. 113-30; *Kannada Kampa, Tamil Kampan*: two proper names, (forthcoming in *JAOS*).

21. Sāyaṇa's name did not suffer the same fate; see M. B. EMENEAU and K. KUSHALAPPA GOWDA, *The etymology of the name Sāyaṇa*, in *JAOS*, 94 (1974), pp. 210-2.